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Who killed Dr. King?

Americans were shocked last winter when evidence surfaced that the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover persistently harassed Martin Luther King, even to the extent of sending him an unsigned letter urging him to kill himself because "your end is approaching . . . you are finished." The suspicion immediately arose that the FBI might have been less than zealous in investigating King's murder . . . and even that FBI officials might have had a hand in the assassination.

Writing in Washington's *Newsworks*, investigator Mark Lane has now charged that a one-time high-level FBI agent was instrumental in removing potential black witnesses from the scene of the murder *before* the shooting.

The director of Memphis' Police and Fire Departments was then Frank C. Holloman, former FBI agent in charge of the office in Atlanta, where King lived, and for eight years the FBI inspector in charge of Hoover's personal office in Washington. Despite the volatile situation in Memphis, Holloman reduced King's police stationary security from ten men (on a previous visit) to two, based at a firehouse near King's motel. Then, hours before the murder, he summoned from the firehouse Detective Ed Redditt, a black officer who headed King's stationary security at the request of city civil rights leaders. Holloman announced to an incredulous Redditt that a Secret Service man had flown to Memphis to relay reports of a conspiracy to murder Redditt, and ordered him home in the company of other officers. Upon arriving, Redditt heard the bulletin: the man he was assigned to protect had been shot. Two days later, Redditt was allowed to return to work. He told Lane: "What about the contract on my life? . . . I never heard another word about that during the last eight years."

The night before the murder, the only two black firemen at the firehouse had been transferred inexplicably to another post, leaving the station understaffed, *Newsworks* said.

Holloman told Lane he was innocent of any wrongdoing. But these and other better known but similarly bizarre events . . . plus James Earl Ray's insistent post-trial claims that he did not kill King . . . are likely to lead to a reopening of the investigation into the murder. After all, it was the FBI that conducted the original investigation. Members of Congress' Black Caucus are privately pressing for a new investigation while publicly claiming they're still making up their minds. Why the low key stance? Members are said to fear the power of the FBI to block the inquiry unless it is launched properly, and to fear that, if the case is publicized, potential witnesses might start to disappear—forever.

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King: investigate the investigators